

STORY 36.

THE WORD OF A MUSLIM SLAVE IS AS SACRED
AS THAT OF A GENERAL.

The Muslim armies made an attack on Jondi-Saboor a town in Persia. The attack failed and the Muslims laid siege to the city.

The siege dragged on for a long time, and there was no prospect of victory or surrender.

One morning the Muslims were surprised to see that the gates were open, there were no soldiers on the walls and there were signs of peace on all sides. They entered the city, and saw the people busy in their daily vocations as if there never had been any war. They could not understand this. So their commander Abu Musa asked the chiefs of the city why they had opened the gates. They said quite innocently, "We have accepted your terms and there the matter ends." Musa was surprised and said "We never wrote to you nor offered to you any terms."

They said "We did receive from you a letter which we can show you. In this you have promised not to do any harm to the citizens if we open the gate."

(Hazrat) Abu Musa was at a loss how to account for this and what to do. He inquired of his lieutenants if any of them had written the letter. But the reply was an emphatic 'no'. At last the letter was produced and was found to have

been written by a Muslim slave. He had assured the people of the city that if they surrendered unconditionally and promised to pay the Jazia no harm would be done to them. There was now a question whether the word given by a slave should be kept, especially when he had given it without the knowledge of the responsible authorities. At last after a long debate the matter was referred to the Caliph for final decision. In a few days his decision came to the effect that the word of a Muslim slave was as sacred as that of a free born Muslim. The promise made to the people of Jandi Saboor must be kept, and the terms offered must be implemented. Upon this most of the people of Jandi-Saboor embraced Islam. It was a triumph of Muslim character.